



Faculty of Cognitive Science and Human Development

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP
CHARACTERISTICS AND EMPLOYEES' EMPOWERMENT**

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS AND
EMPLOYEES' EMPOWERMENT

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The objective of this study is to investigate on the relationship between leaderships' characteristics, which are the leaders' traits, behaviors, and skills, towards the employees' empowerment. This project also teaches us on the important of scheduling and setting the priority of the jobs given to us that would be useful when working in the organization later on.

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ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS AND EMPLOYEES' EMPOWERMENT

Lindawati Binti Padiel

Most of the past researches had asking the questions of "What is empowerment?", and "What are the empowerment processes among employees from the upper management level?" being questioned. The purposed of this study was to investigate the relationship between leadership characteristics, which are leaders' traits, behaviors, and skills, and employees' empowerment within the organization. Besides the relationship between the two variables, this study was also focused on determining the dominant factors among the three leadership characteristics, which are traits, behavior, and skills. This study was conducted at the Human Resource Development Unit, Wisma Bapa Malaysia, Petra Jaya, Kuching, Sarawak. A total of 41 respondents were involved, which are the supporting staffs, as the study were mainly concentrate on the perceptions of employees towards their leaders characteristics. Questionnaire was used for the data collection instrument, which was developed with combinations and modifications of several types of questionnaires, such as Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), Leadership Traits Questionnaire (LTQ), Leadership Behavior Development Questionnaire (LBDQ), Leadership Skill Questionnaire (LSQ), and Psychological Empowerment Scale Questionnaire. The findings showed that the relationship between leaders traits and employees' empowerment had a moderate relationship ($r = 0.611$, $p = 0.028$), among each other. Leaders behaviors had resulted a higher relationship compared to traits ($r = 0.522$, $p = 0.000$), towards employees' empowerment. Leaders skills had also moderate relationship ($r = 0.285$, $p = 0.000$) with employees' empowerment. The leaders' behavior had shown as the dominant factor in leadership characteristics ($R^2 = 0.272$, $P = 0.000$) towards the empowerment. Thus, this study had determined that there are relationship between leadership characteristics and employees' empowerment, as the leaders behaviors are the main influence to employees' empowerment. As a conclusion, leaders, who acting as the role model to their subordinates, must displayed a proper behaviors, for a sample to employees.

ABSTRAK

HUBUNGAN ANTARA CIRI-CIRI KEPIMPINAN DAN KEPERKASAAN PEKERJA

Lindawati Binti Padiel

Kebanyakan daripada kajian-kajian yang telah dijalankan hanya menyentuh akan persoalan "Apakah itu keperkasaan?" dan "Apakah proses memperkasaan yang dijalankan oleh pihak pengurusan atasan terhadap para pekerja bawahan?". Namun, secara amnya, kajian ini dijalankan adalah bertujuan untuk melihat akan hubungkait antara ciri-ciri kepimpinan, yakni keperibadian, tingkahlaku, dan kemahiran pemimpin terhadap keperkasaan para pekerja dalam sesebuah organisasi. Selain daripada melihat hubungkait antara ciri-ciri kepimpinan dan keperkasaan pekerja, kajian ini juga melihat akan faktor dalam ciri-ciri kepimpinan dominan yang lebih mempengaruhi keperkasaan pekerja. Kajian ini telah dijalankan di Unit Pembangunan Sumber Manusia, Wisma Bapa Malaysia, Petra Jaya, Kuching, Sarawak, yang melibatkan seramai 41 orang responden. Responden yang terlibat adalah terdiri daripada kakitangan dalam kumpulan sokongan. Kajian ini hanya memfokuskan kepada persepsi pekerja terhadap ciri-ciri kepimpinan para pemimpin. Borang soalselidik digunakan dalam pengumpulan data, yang mana soalan-soalan dalam borang soalselidik diadaptasi dari pelbagai jenis borang soal selidik yang terkenal seperti, Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), Leadership Traits Questionnaire (LTQ), Leadership Behavior Development Questionnaire (LBDQ), Leadership Skill Questionnaire (LSQ), dan Psychological Empowerment Scale Questionnaire. Dalam kajian ini juga, dua analisis telah digunakan, yakni Analisis Korelasi Pearson, dan Analisis Regresi Linear Berganda. Dapatan menunjukkan bahawa terdapat hubungkait antara keperibadian pemimpin dengan keperkasaan pekerja, ia menunjukkan hubungan yang sederhana ($r = 0.611$, $p = 0.028$) antara satu sama lain. Tingkahlaku pemimpin pula memberikan nilai yang lebih tinggi berbanding keperibadian pemimpin ($r = 0.522$, $p = 0.000$) terhadap keperkasaan pekerja. Manakala kemahiran pemimpin pula juga turut memberikan hubungan yang sederhana ($r = 0.285$, $p = 0.000$) terhadap keperkasaan pekerja. Tingkahlaku pemimpin merupakan faktor yang dominan antara ketiga-tiga ciri yang dikaji ($R^2 = 0.272$, $P = 0.000$) terhadap keperkasaan. Oleh itu, melalui kajian ini, ia telah mengenalpasti bahawa wujudnya hubungkait antara ciri-ciri kepimpinan terhadap keperkasaan pekerja, yakni tingkahlaku pemimpin merupakan faktor utama yang mempengaruhi keperkasaan pekerja dalam organisasi. Kesimpulannya, para pemimpin, yang bertindak selaku model utama kepada para pekerjanya, seharusnya memperagakan kelakuan yang berkualiti, yang menjadi contoh kepada para pekerjanya.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

In the era of globalization, rapid changes in technology and management system had force to change from the autocratic style of management into something that is more to employees' contributions and participation within the organization. Empowerment, as one of the new essence in leadership had being applied in most organization in order to stay competitive in the global market. According to Wellins, Byhan & Wilson, (1991), *empowerment* is defined as the passing on of authority and responsibilities ... to employees who then experience a sense of ownership and control over their job. Thus, indirectly, it is also refers to empowering as a multi-dimensional social process that helps the employees or people to gain control over their own lives.

Empowerment is a process that involves employees' participations with the managerial positions to form a team that work collaboratively within the organization. It is also a cutting-edge "technology" that provides both the strategic advantage companies are seeking and the

opportunity that people are seeking. (Blanchard, Carlos & Randolph, 2000). However, empowerment within organization is not considered as giving absolute power or authority towards the employees. It is use to assist the leaders, who is willing to make some key changes on knowledge, skills, experiences and motivation of every person in the company. (Blanchard, Carlos & Randolph, 2000).

According to Scott & Jaffe (1991), empowerment is building a enhancement of basic self esteem in the work place. (Ramakrishnan, 2000). Self-esteem are commonly refers as human basic skills, tools and responsibilities to do their job, which relies on the participation of employees, the employees innovation and accessibility, and employees' accountability.

Empowerment has different dimensions, which involves on how employees perceived control and competencies, determining what actually the self -needs, goal internalization and meaning from the process itself. As empowerment is a process of gaining control and indirectly involves on how the employees perceived competencies in order to stay competitive among others. Therefore, it refers to the behaviors aspects of individual.

Each employees need to determine what the real things that they want in life. Thus, in self-determination, employees could see or know what they really need and to satisfy it through this dimensions of empowerment. Employees too, must have certain skills to higher the satisfaction towards rewards and the job itself.

In goal internalization, it would allow employees to understand fully the organizational goals that being sets by the leaders and strives to achieve it. When the goals are achieved, this will

give a deeper meaning to employees as in to value the success of it. Besides from the organizational goals, each employee would have their own personal goal to strive for and when it is achieve, it will be a success to the employee and indirectly focusing on traits that lies within leaders and employees themselves.

On the other hand, as one of the leadership trends in the new era, empowerment is normally being related to leaderships. This includes all the leadership aspects, such as leadership's style and characteristics. According to Honer-Long & Schoerberg (2002), leadership's characteristics are being classified into three major aspects, which the individual traits, behavior and skills. As in the traits perspectives that proposed by Stogdill (1994), revealed that there are five important factors that determine the effectiveness of leaderships, which includes the capacity to solve problem and making judgments, achievement in academically and athletically, responsibility, participation in social community, and status.

Meanwhile, in the behavioral aspects, it is focus on the behavior that being displayed, either by the leaders or employees. Several studies indicates that leaders are distinguish by 'participative' behaviors, which includes the delegation of authority and avoidance of close supervision, setting expectations of higher standards of performance, demonstrating interest and concern in their subordinates and facilitating participation in decision-making as cited in Yulk, (1994).

According to Yulk (1994) skills are reflects on few aspects, such as technical, interpersonal and conceptual skills. This indirectly covers individual cognitive abilities in retaining the organization to stay competitive in the global market. (Honer-Long & Schoerberg, 2002).

Thus, in this study, it will determine on how the leaders characteristics could influence the dimensions of empowerment towards the employees within the organization in stead of reflecting on how does employees empowerment would be trusted and, how applicable it is in the organization.

1.1 Background of the Study

In the organization, decision-making is the most important elements that needed to be carefully considered. Managers sometimes could not afford to make all the decisions in all levels at one time. Thus, this will required empowerment from leaders towards their employees. Besides the managers, all the supporting staffs or employees also play the main role in the organization whereby without the employees, all the minor jobs could not be done and kind of impossible for the organizations to achieve their goal. Therefore, managers must understand on the employees' work-process and empowered them to do their job in their own way with their own creativity.

Leadership characteristics are mainly involves and gives high impact on the relationship between leaders and their subordinates. According to Xin and Pelled, (2002) had states that within organizations, there will be always exist conflicts between leaders and their subordinates, which resulted from the leaders behaviors. As behaviors are one of the elements in the leadership characteristics, in organization, it could lead to emotional conflict among leaders and their subordinates. Thus, improper leaders behaviors, will lead to conflicts within the organization.

Empowerment, is a process where the leaders or the upper level management giving the lower level management the authority or power to perform their task in their own creativity. Supporting staffs, such as front-lines managers and technical workers are functions as the back-bone of the entire organization. The employees are the people who deal with the customers problems and have support of the organization to break the rules when necessary (Ramachandran, 2000). Thus it requires on trustworthy among leaders and employees.

Empowerment normally is being practice in the medical areas. This is according to Salmon and Hall, (2003) in their research on patient empowerment and control in the service of medicine. It states that each patient, who has been discharged must take care their own medication as they should, in their own freedom as prescribed by the doctors. This could be related into organizations, where the 'patient' is the employees, who should be given freedom to perform their own task given by the 'doctors', whom are the leaders.

Meanwhile, Leong and Hu (2002) had stated that psychological empowerment is important to employees, either men or women. As, cited in Leong and Hu (2002), Fullord and Enz, (1995) states that empowering employees will effects on the employees' motivations, satisfactions, loyalty, performance, and service delivery, it will impact on the management practices and employees' job enrichment. With empowerment, it wills higher the employees' quality of work and it will help the worker to value their jobs while performing it.

Hancer and George, (2003) states that in the business aspects, managers or leaders are required to trust their workers in performing their jobs. Self-efficacy is the main elements as to ensure the differences in behaviors, where the employees' will react or taken their

managers or leaders as their model and perform similarly to what they observed. With empowerment, it leads to more competent workers and parallel with the organizational goal and objectives, will help the workers to value their jobs as meaningful to them.

Thus, before the implementation of empowerment, leaders, first of all must understand how empowerment works. Both leaders and employees should be exposed to the reality of empowerment before the leaders are empowering their employees. Therefore, this requires increments in knowledge and skills of individuals to be more open and accepting towards their employees.

Nevertheless, leaders are the one who are going to apply the empowerment. Leaders' characteristics, such as traits, behavior, and skills are required to produce more competent employees to be in the organizations. This includes giving greater authority that they used to have, so that they will feel that they are being valued by their managers and proud to be part of the organizations, had a big responsibility on it by giving the power to deal with their own job in their own way or creativity.

1.2 Problem Statement

In every organization, leaderships are a major element that must be practiced. Leadership is focusing on the managerial level to manage the organization in achieving the organizations' mission and vision. With the practices of leaderships, it moves in parallel with the decision making process. Thus, in most of the organization, the decision making process are typically holds by the leaders, which did not allowed the implementations of the empowerment process.

In the traditional management style, most managers would not dare to give or allow their employees to make decisions on behalf of the organization. This is due to the managerial level did not have enough confidence and trust in their employees. They were worried of the outcomes from the decisions that being made at lower level might impact the organizations' reputation, and could indirectly pull the down organization. The lack of trustworthy and confidence on the 'top-to-bottom' decision making procedure had increased the wiriness among the leaders. But, that was in the traditional management style.

Meanwhile, in the era of globalization, the work loads of a leader had increased. As an ordinary human being, people could not afford to do everything on their own at one time. Every human being had their own limitations and need for one another to work with. As stated in Maslow's Theory of Need, it does mention that human have own social needs to be fulfill. (cited in Hughes, 2002). Thus, it goes the same with organization. Managers will not be able to face everything at the same time and therefore, they need the employees to support them within the organization.

As organizations dealing with lots of areas, before facing the external market, organizations should well prepared for the internal sources. Employees are the main element of the internal sources that moves the organization. Thus, managerial level of the organization should ensure that the employees are well trained and being given the authority to perform their own jobs as to their own creativity, before facing the customers.

In the industries that deal directly with human, such as human resource department, it requires a very high level of empowerment, especially in dealing with different types of employees at any time. Employees' training and development required managers to determine the qualified employees to be sent as to avoid the mismatch between the training and the employees.

In dealing with customers, leaders must give authority to their lower level management to manage. Managers could not have time to monitor and solve their customers' problems each, one by one. Instead, most managers do not even bother to know about the customers' complaint. Here, the trained employees are playing the major role to bring the organization to reach their goal by entertaining the customers and giving the excellent services for them.

Employees must be given the authority to make decisions, responsible on what should they do, and deal with the customers' complaints. As every human being needs power and authority to be recognized and feel motivated, thus empowerment allow employees to feel that they are more appreciated by the organization.

Furthermore, dealing with external problems, such as customers' complaints would still requires employees to go for proper training and development. Employees are depending on their leaders when it comes to training. Communication skills training would help to expose the employees to better work etiquettes. Besides, feedback from customers could help in improving the quality of services from employees and indirectly allows the managers or leaders to monitor their employees' performance and customers' satisfactions, even though through the negative indicators.

Thus, this study is actually going to answer certain questions such as:

- ♠ What are the employees' perceptions towards empowerment?
- ♠ Do leadership characteristics, such as leadership traits, leadership behavior, and leadership skills influence the employees' perceptions towards empowerment?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

To determine the relationship between leadership characteristics and the employees perceptions towards empowerment within the organization.

1.3.2 Specific Objective

- To determine the relationship between leadership traits and employees' perceptions towards empowerment.
- To determine the relationship between leadership behavior and employees' perceptions towards empowerment.
- To determine the relationship between leadership skills and employees' perceptions towards empowerment.
- To determine the dominant characteristics that influences the employees' perceptions towards empowerment.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

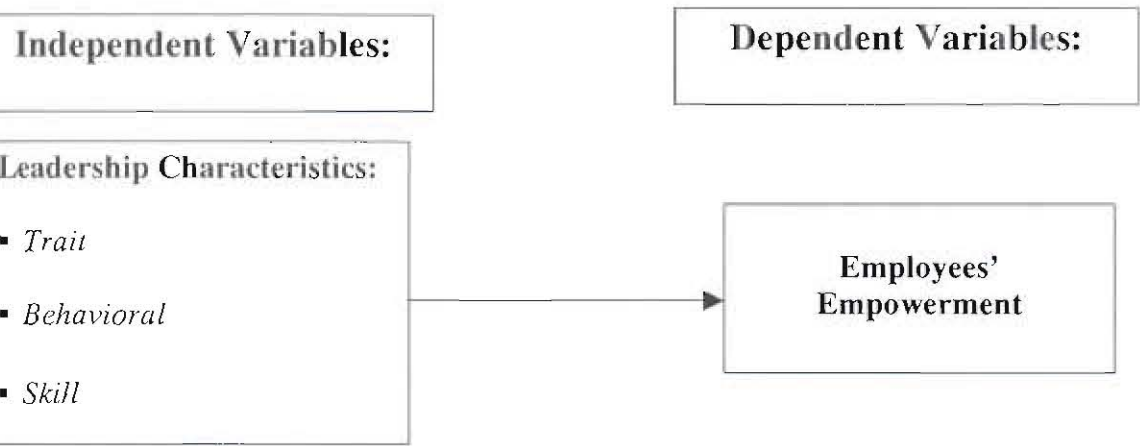


Figure 1.1 Theoretical framework

1.5 Hypotheses of the Study

- Ho. 1:** No significant relationship between leadership traits and employees' perceptions towards empowerment.
- Ho. 2:** No significant relationship between leadership behavior and employees' perceptions towards empowerment.
- Ho. 3:** No significant relationship between leadership skills and employees' perceptions towards empowerment.

1.6 Definitions of Terms

There are several terms that being used in this study. These are the definitions of terms in two different aspects, which are conceptual definition and operational definition.

1.6.1 Relationship

Conceptual Definition: The state of being link or related between one another, either similar or contrast between individuals, things or events. (Pollard & Lieback, 1994; Chan, 2001).

Operational Definition: The state of linkage between leadership characteristics and employees' perceptions towards empowerment.

1.6.2 Leadership Characteristics

Conceptual Definition: Leadership is the art or the ability of influencing others to do up to their maximum performance in order to accomplish any task, objectives, goals or projects given to them. (Cohen, 1990).

Operational Definition: Leadership characteristics that being classified in three major aspects, such as traits, behavior and skills.

1.6.3 Leaders

Conceptual Definition: Leaders are individual who establish directions for a working group of individuals or work team, who gain commitment from the group members to this direction and who then motivate the members to achieve the direction's outcomes. (Cohen, 1992).

Operational Definition: The state of linkage between leadership characteristics and employees' perceptions towards empowerment. Leaders are persons who place in the managerial positions and having their own subordinates and the employees, particularly focusing on the grade A group of staffs in the government sectors, whom giving orders and directions for them and supervised on his or her employees work, so that the task that being given to the employees are successfully one and being implemented properly to achieve the organizational goal.

1.6.4 Employee

Conceptual Definition: Employee is any person who works for another people, either in terms of products or services for the return of wages or salary. (Pollard & Liebeck, 1994; Chan, 2001).

Operational Definition: It refers to all employees who are non-managerial staffs and focusing only on supporting staffs, which includes clericals and technical staffs within the organization.

1.6.5 Empowerment

Conceptual Definition: It is the process through which people become strong enough to participate within, share in control of, and influence events and institution, which will affect their lives. (Torre, 1985).

Operational Definition: Empowerment is leaders openness and trustworthy towards their

employees in order to accomplish the task or job that being given and deal with it in their own creativity.

1.6.6 Trait

Conceptual Definition: Trait is actually a dimension of personality that being used to categories people according to the degree to which they (human) manifest particular characteristics. (Prager, 2001).

Operational Definition: Traits are sets of human personality, which is born-with like trust and openness, responsible and motivation. It is focus more on leaders' traits that could effect the empowerment towards employees and the way employees perceived the leaders traits on the empowerment.

1.6.7 Behavior

Conceptual Definition: The way to react towards other people, attitudes or manners and it is learnt to fit in with the external and internal environment, without the influence from peoples' thought and feelings. (Crowther, Kavanagh & Ashby, 1995).

Operational Definition: It is actions that being displayed by the leaders or managers within the organization that giving impact on the employees' perceptions towards empowerment.

1.6.8 Skill

Conceptual Definition: It is the ability to do certain actions or behavior, experiences, or trained to achieve as the desired. (Crowther, Kavanagh & Ashby, 1995).

Operational Definition: It is the ability that individuals have which focusing on leaders or managers skills, such as the communication and administrative skills to empower their employees within the organization

1.7 Significant of the Study

From this study, it will help to provide some pictures on how the employees within the organization perceive empowerment from their leaders or managers. The outcomes of this study will be helpful to most managers in most organizations in different industries that deal directly with their customers to identify whether the employees are given proper power or responsibility to deal with all the external problems, such as customers' complaints, instantly without delaying.

Besides, this study, too, will help to identify does leaders traits, such as openness and trust, leaders' behavior, such as delegating authority or even leaders' skills, especially in communication does give on impact towards employees empowerment. This study, thus allow leaders to see the good performance of the employee while doing their job base on their creativity and not by fostering. Therefore, it is a necessity to study the relationship between leadership characteristics and employees' empowerment due to employees' performance and